

# Gamers as postmodern subculture

This ethnographic study aims at describing the subculture of computer gaming through the observation of participants of an electronic sport tournament. The research was conducted during two electronic sport tournament events – ASUS FINALS 4 and 5 – which took place in Brno, Czech Republic in December 2012 and June 2013, respectively. Theoretical framework used to describe the gamers subculture, is post-subculturalism and postmodern authenticity by British sociologist David Muggleton.



## SUPPORT FROM THE CROWD

There were two queues in front of the hall. One for early birds and one for regular ticket. Early bird ticket (called VIP ticket) was more expensive, but accompanied by some sponsor gifts such as an energy drink. Huge majority of attendees bought the the VIP ticket, just to show their support for the organizers.

## ONE OF US

One characteristic typical of gaming subculture is the notion of immediacy. Importantly, the immediacy in interpersonal contact is causally connected to amateurism that underlined the whole event (although the attendees were relatively forgiving).

An interesting aspect that further confirms the immediacy aspect was the presence of gamers in the audience itself. The gamers could stay in the backstage, but a portion of them moved freely among the audience, often greeting members of the audience and stopping by for a casual conversation, which further enhanced the community feeling of the event.

## PRESSURE ON THE GAMERS

Unlike players, audience, when viewing certain games, is "omniscient." Audience is then in a much stronger position than the audience of regular sport, often loudly cheering the players, thus forcing them not only to be successful, but also to play the best they can.

## CONCLUSION

According to my observation, it is safe to conclude that gamers behave as a postmodern subculture. They are apolitical, the boundaries between gamers and non-gamers are blurred, and gamers often do not consider themselves to be gamers at all. Subcultures have undergone significant changes since the first studies of punk societies, a movement that is reflected in the changes of the society as a whole.

He reacts to Dick Hebdige's study *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* and according to him subcultures are no longer coherent class- and generation-based groups that can be described through a few simple characteristics.

Muggleton claims that subcultures are currently apolitical, a situation that was impossible in Britain of the seventies and eighties. The critic further explains that subcultures are in a state of flux and that they adopt characteristics typical of postmodernity rather than modernity. In addition, he defines several basic features that are typical of postmodern subcultures: **movement away from class consciousness, depoliticization, blurring of subculture boundaries, individualization, and aestheticization and conscious deauthentication of experiences.** Paradoxically, due to these features the members of a particular subculture do not have to consider themselves to be a part of the subculture and if they do, then only in an embarrassed, self-deprecating manner.

